Topography of Mithilā Based on The Buddhist Sources

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The foundation of Mithilā and it being the cultural centre of India is mentioned in the Vedic literature. This is why, there has been a consensus amongst the Indologists that Mithilā was a main centre of Vedic, i.e., Sanātana religion and the effect of Buddhism and Jainism was negligible here. In recent years, several archaeological evidence, sculptures of Buddha and contemporaneous remains have been found in large numbers, which nullifies the earlier beliefs of the Indologists. Seeing all these, the interest to do a research on this topic increases. In this article, an attempt has been made to do a thorough study on the Buddhist texts (Pāli text) on the basis of Buddhist remains. In these texts, several sites have been mentioned where evidence of Mahātmā Buddha's visits and preaching monks have been found. An attempt to recognize those sites at present and to underline the present archaeological sites from Buddhist point of view has been made in this article.

Mithilā is known today as a cultural region. One can easily trace its existence right from ancient days. The scriptures of the earliest times describe its cultural merits in unmistakable terms. The region enjoyed political autonomy to a great extent until the beginning of the colonial rule. Geographically lying between $25^{0}28'$ and $26^{0}52'$ N latitude and $84^{0}56'$ and $86^{0}46'$ E longitude, it is bounded on the north by the Himālaya and on the south, west and east by the riverine triangle of the Gaṅgā, Gaṇḍaka and Kosī respectively, about 400 km in length and 160 km in breadth, is physically a flat country in its contours, with an elevation of 60.96 metres and hardly any undulations anywhere except for the Sumeshwar and Dun hills at the extreme north with elevations varying between 60.96 metres and 879.0432 metres above the sea level. It comprises the

present districts of Champaran (east and west), Muzaffarpur, Darbhanga, Sitamarhi, Samastipur, Madhubani, Katihar, Saharsa, Vaishali, Purnia, Begusarai, Madhepura, Kishanganj, Supaul, Khagaria, Shivhar and Araria of Bihar and the Terai under Nepal lying between these districts and the lower ranges of the Himalaya. Covering an area of about 64000 square km, almost equal in size of Sri Lanka, just about double the size of Belgium, one and a half times bigger than Denmark and a little less than half the size of England, Mithilā appears, if you fly over it, a vast green spot nestling at the foot of the Himalayas, girdled with sparkling serpentine thrills of the Gandak, Ganga and Kosi.

At the time of the Buddha, Mithilā was capital of Videha country. Videha formed one of the two important principalities of the Vajjian confideracy. The kingdom bordered on the Ganges, had on one side Magadha and on the other Videha.[1] According to the **Mahāgovinda Sutta**[2] , King Reṇu, with the help of Mahāgovinda Jotipāla, founded the Videha kingdom (Mithilā). In the **Gāndhāra Jātaka**[3] , the kingdom of Videha is said to have been three hundred leagues in extent, with sixteen thousand villages, well-filled storehouses and sixteen thousand dancing girls. Videha was a great trade centre; and it is mentioned[4] that merchants arrived from Sāvatthī to sell their wares in Videha. In earlier times Videha was evidently a kingdom, its best known kings being Mahājanaka and Nimi, but in the Buddha's time it was a republic part of the Vajjian federation. The commentaries[5] state that Videha was colonized by the inhabitants who were brought from Pubbavideha by king Māndhātā. Mithilā was also the capital of Makhādeva[6] and eighty four thousand of his descendants, and of various other kings are mentioned in the Jātakas.[7] The size of the city is frequently given[8] as seven leagues in circumference, and the **Mahājanaka Jātaka**[9] contains a description of it. There was a road leading from Campā to Mithilā, a distance of sixty leagues.[10]

There were four market towns at the four gates of Mithilā[11], each being known by the name of Yavamajjhaka. The Buddha is mentioned as having stayed in Mithilā and having

preached there according to the **Makhādeva Sutta**[12] and **Brahmāyu Sutta**.[13] It was also in Mithilā that Therī Vāsaṭṭhī[14] first met the Buddha and entered the order, after having heard him preach. After the Buddha's death, the Videhas of Mithilā claimed a part of his relics and obtained their share.[15] Padumuttara Buddha preached his first sermon to his cousins, Devala and Sujāta, in the park of Mithilā,[16] and later to king Ānanda and his retinue in the same spot.[17] The city of Mithilā has been identified with the modern Janakapura, a small town within the Nepal border, but without the sufficient archaeological evidences this theory is unacceptable. It may be identified with modern Balirajgarh, an important archaeological site, in Madhubani district. According to literary sources Buddha himself had visited so many places in this area. A short note on these Buddhist sites are given below:-

Aṅguttarāpa– It has been identified with the districts of Saharsa, Supaul, Madhepura and Khagaria. The Buddha attained Arhantship within a period of seven days, and later on after forming a separate Buddhist assembly, began to sojourn within the limits of Aṅguttarāpa.[18]

Ambagāma– This village was situated near Vaiśālī between Bhāṇḍagāma and Bhoganagara, on the road from Vaiśālī to Kusīnārā. It was visited by the Buddha on his last tour.[19]

Ambapālivana– It was planted with mangoes and was so called because it belonged to Ambapālī.[20] It was in Vaiśālī and was given to the Buddha by Ambapālī during his last visit that town, at the conclusion of the meal to which she had invited him.[21] Both the Buddha and the monks seem to have stayed there previously during their visits to Vaiśālī.[22] According to the **Saṃyutta Nikāya**[23], a conversation took place between Anuruddha and Sāriputta during a stay in Ambapālivana.

Āpaṇa– It was a guild in Aṅguttarāpa, Āpaṇa may be located within the boundary of the villages of Bangaon and Mahishi in Saharsa district.[24] Pottaliya, a *vānaprasthī*, was not pleased on his being addressed as a householder by the Buddha at Āpaṇa. Later on he was impressed by the Buddha and took refuge in his *Saṅgha*.[25] From Āpaṇa the Buddha went to

Kusīnārā.[26] It was here that Sela, a learned Brāhmaṇa of the locality, along with his three hundred pupils, was converted into Buddhist.

Bahuputtaka Cetiya– It was situated near Vaiśālī.[27] The Buddha said to have stayed there.[28] According to the commentaries,[29] there was a many-branched Nyagrodha tree where people prayed for sons to seek the favours of the deva of the tree.

Beluva– It was just outside the gates of Vaiśālī and was to the south of this city.[30] Beluva was a small village and when the Buddha was there, the monks stayed in Vaiśālī. The Buddha spent his last years at Beluva.[31]

Bhāṇḍagāma– This village was near Vaiśālī. The Buddha visited it during his last tour and while staying there he talked to the monks on four conditions which lead to Nibbāna righteousness, earnest thought, wisdom and freedom.[32]

Bhogagāmanagara– This village was situated between Pāvā and Vaiśālī where the Buddha stayed on his last journey, in the Ānanda-Cetiya and where he preached a sermon on the four Mahāpadesā.[33]

Cāpāla-Cetiya– This *vihāra* was situated in the outskirts of Vaiśālī. The **Aṅguttara commentary**[34] states that during the first twenty years of the Buddha's monastic life, he sometimes, dwelt in Cāpāla-Cetiya. It was once the residence of the Yakkha Cāpāla, but, later, a *vihāra* was eracted on the site for the use of the Buddha.[35]

Gaggaligāma– It was a village situated on the bank of the Gaṅgā,[36] this is not identified yet.

Gilānasālā – It was a sick ward in the Kūṭāgārasālā of Vaiśālī. The Buddha preached **Gilāna Sutta** to an ill monk here.[37]

Gokulāṅka Vihāra– This monastery was built by cowherds for Dhaniya and his wife after their ordination. The residence of Dhaniya was on the bank of the river Mahī in Mithilā. According to Buddhaghoṣa, it existed even in his day.[38]

Gosingasāla-vana – On his onward journey from Ñātikā to Vaiśālī, Buddha sojourned at Gosingasāla Vana.[39]

Gotamaka-Cetiya – It was situated near and to the south of Vaiśālī.[40] The shrine was pre-Buddhist and dedicated to a Yakkha named Gotamaka. A vihāra was later on built on the spot for the Buddha and his monks.[41] The Gotamaka Sutta was preached in the Gotamaka-Cetiya.[42]

Hatthigāma – This village was situated on the road from Vaiśālī to Bhoganagara. The Buddha stayed there and was visited by Ugga.[43] On his last journey he took rest in the village.[44]

Jambugāma– The name may suggest that there were many trees of blackberry here. Further north-west to Ambagāma lay Jambugāma which was visited by the Buddha in the last year of his life.[45]

Kalandaka– It was near Vaiśālī. It was the birth place of Sudinna.[46] who is called Kalandakaputta on account of his native village and not of his father.[47] The Sudinna became a monk, who, after being ordained, returned to his former wife and had relations with her, thus becoming guilty of the first Pārājika offence.[48]

Kapinacchanā– Kapinacchanā may have been a name for the cemetery near Vaiśālī where Kappitaka lived.[49] It was a locality near Vaishali where lived the Thera Kappitaka, teacher of Upāli.[50] It was so called because monkey and men used to dance there.[51]

Kapinahya Cetiya– A Chetiya of this name is said to have existed at Vaiśālī at that time.[52]

Koṭigāma– Koṭigāma was a village in Mithilā.[53] During his last tour, the Buddha crossed the river at Pāṭaligāma, went on to Koṭigāma, and remained in that village preaching the monks. This village was one gavuta or 5.12064 km distant from the Ganges.[54] It may have been near Hajipur. Some of the scholars have identified it with Chechar (Vaishali).

Kūṭāgārasālā – The Kūṭāgārasālā was on the banks of the lake Markaṭa[55] (*Markaṭahradatīre*) in the Mahāvana near Vaiśālī. The Buddha stayed there on several occasions, and in the books are found records of various eminent person who visited him there and of his conversations which are mentioned in the **Majhhima Nikāya**.[56]

Makhādeva Āmbavana- It was a mango-grove in Mithilā where Makhādeva lived in meditation after retiring from household life.[57] This grove existed in the time of the Budhha and during his stay there with Ānanda, he preached the **Makhādeva Sutta**.[58] Buddhaghoṣa explains[59] that the garden was originally planned by Makhādeva, and that other kings, from time to time, replaced trees which became dry.

Markaṭahrada Cetiya- A Cetiya was situated on the bank of the famous monkey tank.[60] This might refer to the Kūṭāgārasālā about which the **Divyāvadāna**[61] expressly states that the Kūṭāgārasālā was situated on the bank of the monkey tank at Vaiśālī.

Mithiluyyāna- It was a park in Mithilā where Padumuttara Buddha preached his first sermon.[62]

Nāgavana – Nāgavana was near Hatthigāma. It was there that Uggagahapati first met the Buddha and was converted in to the Buddhism.[63]

Ñaṭikā- Ñaṭikā or Nadikā was situated on the highway between Koṭigāma and Vaiśālī. The Buddha first went their in the course of one of his tours, and the inhabitants, being greatly attracted by him, built a residence of brick for him, the Giñjakāvasatha, which, in course of time bacame a great Vihāra.[64] This village may be identified with the present Lalganj in Vaishali district.

Pabbataraṭṭha- In the centre of Videha was Pabbataraṭṭha, which was the city Dhammakoṇḍa, the residence of Dhaniya.[65]

Pubbajira- The village was in the land of Vajjis[66] or Mithilā which was the constant dwelling place of Channa. The people there were blamed for his suicide.

Saptāmraka Chetiya – It was situated in the west of Vaiśālī.[67] It was originally dedicated to some deity, but after the Buddha's visit to Vaiśālī, it became a place of residence for him.[68] Possibly there were seven mango trees lending their name to the shrine.

Sārandada Cetiya- Once, a number of Licchavis visited the Buddha at the Sārandada Cetiya, and he told them seven things which would ensure their welfare and prevent them from

failing: frequent assemblies, concord, honouring of tradition and convention, respect for elders, courtesy towards woman, homage paid to places of worship and protection of holy men in their midst.[69]

Udena Cetiya– It was situated in the east of Vaiśālī [70] and was considered one of the beautiful spots of that town.[71] In the Buddha's time a Vihāra had been erected on the spot where this shrine stood and this Vihāra had previously been dedicated to the Yakkha Udena.[72]

Ukkācelā– This village was near Vaiśālī, on the road from Rājagṛha to Vaiśālī.[73] Once while Sāriputta was staying there, the *Paribhājaka Sāmaṇḍaka* visited him and talked to him about *Nibbāna*.[74] After the death of Sāriputta and *Moggallāna*, within a fortnight of each other, the Buddha came to Ukkācelā on his way to Vaiśālī and at a gathering of the monks, highly praised the two chief disciples and spoke of the loss the order had sustained by their death, [75] The **Cūlagapālaka Sutta** was also preached at the village.[76] It has been identified with the present Hajipur.[77] Ruins of the famous stūpa built by Aśoka have been located in the Ramchaura locality of Hajipur town.

Vaiśālī– The early Buddhist texts refer Vaiśālī as the capital of the powerful kingdom of the Licchavis. The Buddha visited Vaishali thrice in the course of his wandering and obtained considerable following for his doctrines there. The excavations have unearthed pre-christian stūpa at Vaishali, which is believed by the excavator to be relic stūpa of Buddha. Modern Basarh, a village in Vaishali district, have been identified with ancient Vaiśālī by most of the scholars.

Vālikārāma– It was a monastery in Vaiśālī where the question of the ten point raised by the Vajjiputta monks was settled.[78] It was also the dwelling place of Upāli, Dāsaka's teacher.[79]

Yavamajjhika– The village was situated in Mithilā. It was the residence of Amaradevī, wife of Mahosadha. One Jātaka says there were villages of this name on the four sides of Mithilā.[80]

A large number of archeological sites have been discovered in Mithilā region which indicates thet Mithilā was also influenced by the Buddha and Buddhism. Numerous images of the Buddha and some beautiful fragments of Buddhist art and other objects throw light on the spread of Buddhist culture in this region. Some modern places of Mithilā are very important in this context. A short note on these archeological sites are given below:

Akaur– This village is situated under benipatti block in Madhubani district. An image of the dhyānī Buddha is preserved in a personal collection of a villager.[81]

Andhra Tharhi– This Buddhist site is situated near Vachaspatinagar Railway Station on Laukaha-Jhanjharpur line of north eastern railway. It lies between $26^{0}22'$ N and $86^{0}20'$ E in Madhubani district. This place was a famous tīrtha for the Buddhists, Jainas and Sanātanas. Different kinds of antiquities have been found in this village. An image of Buddha without head and the upper part of a broken image of a camaragrāhiṇī Yakṣī have been found here. (Fig. 27A and 27B) Sculptures of Sūrya, Viṣṇu and other deities have been found here, recently. An image of Viṣṇu with the inscription of Śrīdharadāsa was found here at Kamalāditya sthāna ($26^{0}28'$ N $86^{0}20'$ E).[82]

A rare image of Tārā (Fig. 11) was discovered on 11th February 2016 from a dried pond named Sarakhara Pokhara by a JCB machine while digging. The size of the image is 27"×20". An inscription of three line is inscribed on the pedestal of Goddess Tārā. The size of inscription is 7"×15". The inscription is written by Śrīdharadāsa in Mithilākṣara during 11-12th century. Śrīdhara was a minister of Nānyadeva, founder of Karṇāṭa dynasty of Mithilā. According to Pt. Bhavanath Jha the inscription is Mahāyānamantra of Buddhists –

"1.Oṃ ye dharmmā hetuprabhavā hetuṃ teṣāṃ tathāgatohyavadat=teṣāṃ ca yo

2.nirodha evaṃ vādī mahāśramaṇaḥ ।। deyadharmmoyaṃ pravaramahā-

3.yāna++[prakā]raḥ prava+[rtta]napurarājye sudhā-vihāre bhagavate dattaḥ .

The image is made up of black stone. Buddhist deity Tārā is sitting in *lalitāsana* and her right hand is in *varada mudrā* on the right knee. The image is very beautiful and is decorated with ornaments. An image of Lord Buddha in *bhūmisparśa mudrā* is on the top right hand corner. Some other images are also seen in right hand side of the Goddess. This image holds a major importance for further research on history of Mithilā. An image of headless Buddha made of metal has been found here previously which was gifted by Late Pt. Sahadev Jha to the Vachaspati museum, Andhra-tharhi.[83] An inscribed broken image of Viṣṇu, Kamalāditya (Viṣṇu) and broken image of Sūrya are preserved in Kamalāditya temple. This inscription was also written by Śrīdhara in Mithilākṣara.[84] A year ago, images of Viṣṇu and Sūrya, dated 11th-12th century AD., has been found in the Sarakharā pokhara.[85]

Asurgarh– This ruined fort is situated under Madhepur block in Madhubani about 65 km southeast from the district town, lies between 26°10' N latitude and 80°30' S longitude. The area of the fort is about 50 acres on the western bank of Tiljugā river near Gadhagaon. The bricks of the fort is similar to the bricks of Balirajgarh, Rajagir and other ruins of the Buddhist origin.[86]

Balia– Balia is situated 20 km east from Begusarai town. Two images of the Buddha, one in *bhūmisparśa mudrā* and another in *padmāsana* have been found here. The first image is of 30 cm height and 22.2 cm width and is inscribed in Pāla Brāhmī script as "*Ye dhammā hetuprabhavā* etc.." The image is made up of black stone. The second image is also made up of black stone and three lines are inscribed in it. The size of image is 29.5cm×20cm. Upper part of the image is broken.[87]

Balirajgarh– This site is situated under Babubarhi block in Madhubani district and lies between 26°27'32" N and 86°19'20" E. This site is the largest archaeological site in Bihar. The area is about 175 acres and is situated 30 Km north east from Madhubani town. According to the reports of the excavations, antiquities of an ancient city are found here. On

the basis of the antiquities, historians say that this was the capital of Videha or Mithilā in Janaka's time and the Buddhist age also.[88]

Baratpur– This village is situated in Saharsa district and lies between 25°43' N and 86° 45'E. A Bauddha Math was established by the Pāla king here. An image of Budhesh called Budhaiswami has been found here.[89] According to P.C. Rai Chaudhary, there were two Bauddha stūpas in Baratpur.[90]

Bari- This site is situated under Singhiya block in Samastipur district. Here an image of Goddess Tārā in black stone is kept in a temple.[91]

Barijan– This site is situated under Kochadhaman P.S. in Kishanganj district and lies between 26°12' N latitude and 87°50' E longitude. An image of Sūrya in black stone was found at Barijan village in 1962. The weight of the image is 70 kg. and is kept under a large Pīpala tree. There are mounds and ruins of ancient buildings also here.[92]

Barijangarh– The fort of Barijana is situated under Bahadurganj P.S. in Purnia district. A stūpa and sculptures have been found here.[93]

Bazidpur Saidad- This site is situated 22km. to the south east of Hajipur and lies between 25036'45" N and 85023' E. There is a circular mound, locally known as Ānanda Stūpa. A terracotta image of Buddha in *dhyānamudrā* on double lotus pedestal is kept in the middle school situated on the mound.[94]

Bedi- This site is situated about 1 Km. from Pipra Chawk, near Chakiya in East Champaran district. This is a 10 meter high structural mound and apparently a stūpa site.[95]

Belaunti– This site is situated in Saharsa district. A Bauddha Maṭha was established here by Pāla King.[96]

Belogarh– This site is situated in Saharsa district. A Bauddha Maṭha was established here by Pāla King.[97]

Bharulli – This site is situated under Singhwara P.S. in Darbhanga district. An image of Buddha in black stone has been found here, but now unavailable.[98]

Bideshwar– An image of Buddha (Fig. 28) in the *bhūmisparśamudrā* on *Kamalāsana* has been recovered from the village Bideshwar (26.1347 N 86.1320 E) in the Madhubani

district, but now unavailable. It is datable to the 12th centuries A.D.[99] Images of Agni and Viṣṇu have been also found here. It was a piligrimage for both the Buddhists and Sanātanas.

Bihat– A small black stone image found in village Bihat (near Teghara Railway Station in Begusarai district) represent the Buddhist art of the post Gupta period.[100]

Birpur– A very fine image of standing Buddha with image of Buddha on all sides in various mudrās has been found here. There is an inscription at the pedestal of the image. It is a famous Buddhist mantra. *Svasti. Ye dhamma hetuprabhavā hetuṃ.... Tathāgatovadat (tesaṃ) ca yo nirodha evaṃ vādi mahāśramaṇaḥ.*[101] The script of this inscription belongs to the 9th century and the language is Sanskrit. This image is important as in this image we find Buddha in different mudrās. We know about a few mudrās of Buddha and the present image represents most of them. In *abhayamudrā* hands with the fingers raised upward is turned to its front. The main image seems to have been in *Abhaya mudrā* but as both the hands are broken it is difficult to say anything with certainty. An image of Avalokiteśvara, Cāmuṇḍā devī, dancing Gaṇeśa, Sūrya, Revanta, Piṅgala in door frame, Makaramukha and bull have also been found here. An image of Buddha, dated in 10th century and a Buddha panel of 9th century have been found here, too. Fragment of a votive stūpa dated in 10th century has been found from this place.[102] An inscribed image of Umā-Maheśvara has also been found here.

Bisa Sagar- This is a large and unidentified stupa mound like Kesaria between Pipra Chank and the modern village Kesaria in East Champaran district.[103]

Budhiyagarhi– This site is situated under Singheshvar P.S. in Madhepura district. A Bauddha Maṭha was established here by Pāla King.[104]

Chechar– This site is situated in Vaishali district on the left bank of river Gaṅgā. On the basis of the archaeological evidences, it may be said that there was an ancient city in the village Chechar. The Antiquities related to the Buddha have been preserved in the local museum. Ānanda stūpa was situated

here. Ānanda spent his last dayd here.[105] Several sculptures of black stone and sandstone, including some fragmented images are placed in the village temple. It was an important Buddhist complex having a stūpa, a temple and a monastery. The image of the Buddha in *bhūmisparśamudrā* and an inscribed image of Buddha in *bhūmisparśamudrā* in blackstone are kept in the village temple.

Chougama– The pieces of Buddhist art were discovered in course of a trial excavation carried on in the chougama village under Benipur block in Darbhanga district. The site is full of ancient mounds. The excavation has brought to light the existence of a beautiful complete structure of a temple, perhaps the only specimen of temple architecture in Mithilā.[106] The temple contains an image of Varāha, and is a definite indication of Buddhist art in black stone of the post Gupta period.[107]

Dabhaichha- This site is located 7 km. to the southwest of Patepur and 35 Km. northeast of Hajipur in Vaishali district. A black stone sculpture of Tārā with a Nīlotpala and two votive Stūpa depicted on the stele. An inscription in Mithilākṣara is also found on the stele.[108] (Fig. 14)

Dolakha (Nepal) – An image of Buddha dated in 15-16th century has been discovered from this place. An image of Tārā is kept here. [109]

Girodih– Remains of a Buddhist Stūpa have been discovered from Girodih in Purnea district.[110]

Hanti– This village is situated near Madhubani Railway station (26.1438 N 86.2846 E). An image of Buddha of Pāla period is here.[111]

Jagatpur- This site is situated near Baruara village in Supaul district. An image of Goddess Tārā of c. 10th to 11th century with an inscription (*ye dharmā hetuprabhavā*) has been found in 1967 which is preserved in Patna Museum.[112]

Jalasima – This site is situated in Saharsa district. Here a Bauddha vihāra was established by the Pāla king.[113]

Jamuthari– The village is situated under Jhanjharpur P.S. in Madhubani district. A miniature bronze image of the

Buddha has been found in the village.[114] A Śivaliṅga has also been found here. This center was also a religious site for Buddhists and Shaivites.

Jarahaṭiya – A few years back, big image of the Dhyānī Buddha datable in 8th century A.D. was unearthed in a field to the west of the tank, which is placed in front of Lakshmishwar Museum in Darbhanga, said to have been dug by order of Mahāraja Bhairava Singh of the Oinavāra dynasty of Mithilā in village Jarahatiya under Pandaul block in Madhubani district.[115] The image bears an inscription on the pedestal, but it is too blurred to be deciphered. The head of that image (Fig. 29) has been found in September 2014.[116] Maithila scholars believed that it was an important Buddhist site in ancient times.[117]

Jayamaṅgalā Gaḍha– This archaeological site is in Begusarai district. Buddhist antiquities have also been found here (25⁰35'30"N, 86⁰94'10"E). A temple of Goddess Jayamaṅgalā is also here.[118]

Kapileshvarasthan– This site is situated on Darbhanga-Jayanagar road in Madhubani district. An image of Lokeśvara was found near a sacred Śiva temple called Kapileshvarasthan.[119]

Kesariya– There is large Buddhist stūpa at Kesariya in the district East Champaran. According to Hiuentsiang, this stūpa was situated about 33.5 km north-west to Vaishali.[120] Cunningham identified it as Kesariya, an important archaeological site.[121] The period of this monument is probably between 200 AD and 700 AD.[122]

Kolhua– This site is located under Vaishali district. An Aśokan pillar, a brick stūpa with inscription, remains of Kūṭāgārasālā and an unique latrine pan of Kuṣāṇa period have been found in Kolhua.

Kopagarh – This site is situated under Kewati block in Darbhanga district. Dr. Satyendra Kumar Jha discovered it as an NBP site. There was an important city in Buddhist age.[123]

Kusi- This site is situated under Kanti P.S. in Muzaffarpur district. This is an important archeological site

which is identified as Nirvāṇa place of Lord Buddha by some scholars.

Lakhanaur- This site is situated in Madhubani district. An image of Buddha, dated 10th century, is found in the village.[124]

Lauria Nandangarh– This site is famous for the pillar of Aśoka and situated about 25 km northwest to Betia town. A number of antiquities have been found in excavation.[125] There is a mound called as Bauddha stūpa.[126] Hiuentsiang also visited the pillar and mentioned it as Aśokan pillar.[127] This site was reserved for the funeral in the vedic and Buddhist periods.[128]

Lauriya Areraj– This site is situated about 32 km northwest from Kesariya. A long stone pillar is standing at about 2 km southwest from the village. An inscription was inscribed by Aśoka on that pillar.[129] Ālāra Kālāma Āśrama is situated in the village where Buddha stayed for ten days and tried to learn philosophical thoughts.[130]

Mahendri– It lies between Balan and Bainti rivers. Its area covers about two bighas of land. A full size face of Buddha, Caturmukhī Śiva, flying Gandharva, various other broken pieces of images and other antiquities of black stone has been found here.[131]

Maheshpur- This site is situated under Pipra block in Saharsa district. An image of Buddha in *bhūmisparśa mudrā* was found in the village.[132]

Mahishi– This old village is situated under Saharsa district. This was the birth place of famous philosopher Maṇḍana Miśra. Ugratārā sthana is a famous tirth sthal for Buddhists and Hindus. Ugratārā is a Buddhist deity. Other important images of Lord Buddha have been found here datable in eleventh and twelfth century A.D.[133]

Mahiya- This site is situated under Taradih block in Darbhanga district. A broken image of Buddha in *bhūmisparśamudrā* has been found in the village.[134] (Fig. 30).

Mangrauni– A beautiful image of Tārā seated in *arddhaparyaṅkamudrā* has been discovered from the village Mangrauni (26.3525 N 86.0667 E), about 2 KM from Madhubani.[135] A votive stūpa has been shown in the *Prabhāvalī* of the deity. Two female attendents are shown standing on either

side of the Goddess. The effigy of the image of Buddha has been shown on the appex of the Prabhāvalī. It is datable to the 11th century A.D. An image of *Trailokyavijaya*, a Vajrayāna Buddhist diety is found in the village (18.5x10.5 cm.)

Manpaur (Madhubani district) – The village is under Benipatti P.S. and is located at 26.33 N latitude and 86.07 E longitude. An image of Buddha in *bhūmisparśamudrā* with an inscription *yenadharmadatta koeri*, dated 11th century A.D. has been found here.[136] We get references of a vegetable cultivator, named Dharmadatta of koeri caste, who donated this image of the Buddha to be enshrined in a temple.[137]

Mathahi-Pithahi– This site is situated in Madhepura district. This is known as Bauddha Maṭha. An ancient mound is noticed here.[138]

Miran Khan– (Kewati block Darbhanga) A Buddhist stūpa was noticed by Dr. Satyendra Kr. Jha at this place.[139]

Naulāgaḍha– This archaeological site is situated about 25 km north of Begusarai and lies at 25^0 33' N latitude and 86^{0}4'E longitude. Buddhist antiquities have been found here also.[140]

Pandaul– A red stone life image of the Buddha weighing about 11 quintel belonging to the Gupta period, was discovered in a village near Pandaul in Madhubani district.[141]

Pāṇḍavasthāna– This site is situated under Dalsingsarai block in Samastipur district and lies between 20^{0}40'57" N and 85^{0}47'51"E. Dr. P.N. Mehta found copper coins, potteries and stone bead here. Kashi Prasad Jaiswal Research Institute Patna has excavated this site. On the basis of its findings, it is said that there was a Buddhist city named Bhaddiya in ancient period.[142]

Pastan-Navtoli– This village is situated under Andhra Tharhi P.S. in Madhubani district. There was a brick stūpa (Fig. 32) related to Buddhism here in early medieval period. Many sculptures have been found there.[143]

Rajnagar – An image of Buddha is kept in the famous Kālī Mandira of Raj campus.[144]

Rajvara– This is situated under Barouni block in Begusarai district. An image of Buddhist deity (54 cm x 45.4 cm) made of black stone is preserved here. This four armed broken image is called as Mārīci, a Buddhist Devī.[145]

Rampurava – This site is famous for the Aśokan pillar.[146] There was a Buddhist site in ancient period.

Sagardiha – This site is situated in East Champaran district. Remains of a fort, Pound and a Bauddha stūpa has been found here.[147]

Sahugarh – This site is situated in Madhepura district and ruins of a Bauddha Stūpa is here.[148]

Sakaligarh– This archaeological site is situated under Banmankhi P.S. in Purnea district. A brick stūpa has been discovered in Sakaligarh. Mauryan and Śuṅga antiquities are found here. A pillar like Aśokan pillar has also been found here. It is said that Aśoka established his pillar on this Buddhist site. A golden coin of Kuṣāṇa period has also been found here.[149]

Salempur- This site is situated in Vaishali district. Fragments of an Aśokan Pillar were once found in this village on Vaishali-Lalganj road. This is identified with the site of Ānanda's Stūpa.[150]

Samho – This is situated in Begusarai district. It is located at 24.2127 E and 80.5303 N. An image of Buddha in black stone with an inscription is preserved in the village Samho. It is now worshipped by the local people.[151]

Sanghaul– It is situated two and a half km west of Begusarai town. The mound is 1-3 meters in height. Prof. R.K. Choudhary collected some broken pieces of icons of black stone, a gem which is of Buddhist deities. The image of Buddha is in *Bhūmisparśamudrā* and he is sitting on *Padmāsana*. An inscription is also in the image. According to R.K. Choudhary, this word is 'Virupa' and written during 800 AD-1000 AD.[152] A structure of votive stūpa and vihāra have also been found here.[153]

Uccaitha- This famous site is situated under Benipatti block in Madhubani district. It is famous as the birthplace of

Kālidāsa and a temple of Goddess Chinnamastā. An image of Lord Buddha is kept in this temple (Fig. No. 31)

Ulava- This site is about 2 km. south from Sanghaul. Buddhist sculptures have been found in the village Ulava (Begusarai).[154]

Vasantpur– This site is situated in Saharsa district. A Bauddha Maṭha was established here by Pāla King.[155]

Besides above mentioned Buddhist places, remains have also been found from different places of this region which are kept in the Lakshmishwar museum of Darbhanga, Begusarai museum, Andhra Tharhi museum and different archaeological departments. Chandradhari Museum, Darbhanga also preserves certain Buddhist deities.

A stone image of Goddess Tārā surrounded by five Dhyānī Buddhas, preserved in the Chandradhari Museum, Darbhanga is made of black basalt stone with unique face. Tārā is sitting in the *Varadamudrā* on a double pedestal. Decorated *prabhavalī* of the deity bears an inscription. According to Motichand, the image is of 10th century AD.[156] An image of sitting Tārā made of bronze has presently been housed in Chandradhari museum. An image of Buddha in *bhūmisparśamudrā* on a double lotus pedestal with an inscription in Mithilākṣara has been preserved in the museum. It is datable back to the 8th-12th century A.D.[157]

More over, numerous Buddhist shrines and temples in Mithilā are lying buried under the deep water of the Kosi, Kamala, Bagamati and Gandak rivers. Numerous valuable objects of Buddhist antiquities in the Kosi region have been practically washed away by the Kosi's flood of which we have unfortunately no traces left now.

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चित्र संख्या 27 : अंधराठाढ़ीक वाचस्पति संग्रहालयक बुद्ध आ यक्षी।



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संपादक

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